God Our Portion and His Word Our Treasure

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"You are my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep Your Words." Psalm 119:57.

OBSERVE the close connection between privilege and duty. "You are my portion, O Lord." This is an unspeakable happiness. "I have said that I would keep Your Words"—this is the fitting return for such a blessing. Every mercy given us by the Lord brings with it a claim which we ought, in gratitude, to recognize. Notice very carefully the order in which the privilege and the duty are arranged. The blessing of Grace is first and the fruit of gratitude next. The Grace given is the root and the resolve is the fruit growing out of it. It is not, "I have said that I would keep Your Words, that You may be my portion, O Lord." No, first the portion is enjoyed by faith and then the resolution is formed. "You are my portion, O Lord, I have You already in present possession. Therefore will I, as You shall help me, keep Your Words."

Duty in order to privilege is the Law—God be thanked that we are not under it, for we should never obtain a single blessing thereby! But privilege in order to obedience is the Gospel—God grant that we may know the fullness of its power to sanctify our souls! The Lord must first be your portion before you will be able to keep His Words. How can a man keep what he has not received? Without God to be our portion, where will the strength come from to accomplish so difficult a duty as the keeping of God's Words? See to it, all of you, that you do not reverse the order! Do not, as the old proverb says, put the cart before the horse.

Let all things come in their due course and keep due rank, for mischief comes of the wrong placing of things. First receive from Divine Grace until you can say, "You are my portion, O Lord," and then give forth, by daily service, what God has worked within, and say, "I will keep Your Words." Each possession not only involves service, but appropriate service, even as each plant bears it own flower. The general principle which calls for service bears a particular application, for each particular Gospel benefit is linked with some special Gospel service. The unspeakable gift of having God for our portion has here fastened to it the peculiar excellence of keeping God's Words and one objective of the present sermon will be to show that this is by no means an accidental arrangement, but that a true connection really exists and ought to be earnestly acknowledged by every child of God.

Because you can say, "You are my portion, O Lord," you ought, also, to add, "I will keep Your Words." First, this morning, let us consider the infinite possession—"You are my

portion, O Lord." Secondly, the appropriate resolution—"I have said that I would keep Your Words."

I. Begin, then, where the text begins, with THE INFINITE POSSESSION. "You are my portion, O Lord." Here,

first, notice a clear distinction. The Psalmist declares the Lord to be his portion in distinction to the portion of the ungodly. "These often have their portion in this life; they increase in riches." The 73rd Psalm gives a full and particular description of the ungodly in their prime and glory when, "their eyes stand out with fatness" and, "they have more than heart can wish."

But David did not desire to share their short-lived joys. He sought his happiness elsewhere, looking to the Creator rather than the creatures and to eternity rather than time—

"What sinners value I resign, Lord, 'tis enough if You are mine." "You are my portion, O Lord." It is better to have our good God than all the goods in the world! It is better to have God for our All than to have all and be without Him. He who possesses God lives at the wellhead and drinks from the ever-flowing fountain. He who owns the choicest worldly goods, apart from Him, only drinks of the foul leavings which remain in the corners of earth's broken cisterns. What is the whole universe compared with Him who made it? What are the base pleasures of sin compared with the fullness of joy which always dwells at God's right hand?

David says, "You are my portion," evidently in opposition to the future portion of the wicked. "Upon the wicked, God shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." There is to come to the ungodly a dreadful awakening from their dream of security. They shall wake up in another world to find that their wealth has vanished, their joys have forever fled and that they must forever suffer the loss of all things and remain utterly undone. For them an unutterable woe is prepared and wrath like a fierce hurricane shall heat upon their guilty souls without end!

But, "You are my portion, O Lord." For me there shall be no deadly snares in life, nor horrible tempest in death. So long as I abide in this body, I shall be fed upon Your goodness, and when I shall fall asleep and shall afterwards awaken in the likeness of my Redeemer, I shall find myself in eternal possession of my God who is my All in All. Nor does the distinction end here. David here makes a distinction between his true position and the earthly comforts with which the Lord had endowed him. He was a king and had many possessions, but none of these were his portion! Some of the Lord's people are not the subjects of distressing poverty—on the contrary, they are blessed with many comforts for which they ought to praise God day and night—but none of these things are their peculiar heritage as joint heirs with Jesus.

Beloved, whatever we have in this world we are bound to turn our eyes to God and say, "This is not my portion. You are my portion, O Lord." The comforts of this life are like the

youth's allowance—they are not the estate to which he is the heir—upon which he will enter when the fullness of time shall come. Present mercies are a sip by the way, a morsel eaten to satisfy the stomach—our full meal will be eaten at the Great Supper of the Lamb! We are like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Canaan, dwelling in tents, as strangers and foreigners. The flocks and herds which graze around our camp are greatly valued, but still, we look not on those things as our portion—Canaan itself is the lot of our covenanted inheritance—and nothing else will content us. We look for a city which has foundations whose Builder and Maker is

God!

Oh, Beloved, take care of ever making common things your portion! If riches increase, set not your heart upon them! If God indulges you with a healthful and happy family. If you are in a good state of bodily health. If your business prospers and if the Lord pours out for you temporal mercies from a full horn, yet never make these things your idols! Live above them and say, "I cannot be put off with these. You are my portion, O God." I think David carried this distinction right into eternity.

Some think of Heaven as this and some as that. Fellowship with Believers of all ages is the great desire of some. Others long for Paradise as a place of increased knowledge, to know even as they are known. And a third rejoice in it chiefly as a haven of rest. There are grounds for each of these forms of desire, but concerning Heaven, this is the Believer's chief thought—that he will be with God, and that God will be forever his joy and bliss! No sins will hide the brightness of Jehovah's Glory from our eyes! No doubts will disturb the deep calm of our enjoyment of Jehovah's love when once we fully enter upon our portion. We shall be forever with the Lord and nothing more or better can be imagined!

God is our Heaven! Whom have I in Heaven but You? Draw, then, a clear distinction between the things that are seen, which are not your portion, and the things which are not seen, which are your true heritage. Between the temporal and fleeting joys which amuse us by the way and the abiding and eternal felicity which will satisfy us at the end. Allow nothing to rival the chief good in your judgment or your affections, but cry evermore, "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You."

Notice, next, the positive claim—"You are my portion, O Lord." He deliberately declares this in the silence of his soul. As for the ungodly, they are boasting of their prosperity. They are girding themselves with pride as with a golden chain. But I dare not seek my joy in such matters, "You are my portion, O Lord." To get into a corner quietly. To commune with your heart and be still. And then to find your soul reveling in the wealth which she finds in her God—this is true happiness! Let worldlings babble on as they may and let the trumpet of fame sound out its loudest blasts for her darlings—we will not envy her rich men or her great men so long as in the deep of our spirit we can feel that the Eternal, Himself, has declared, "I will be their God."

Ours is the best portion by far! Whether we have little or much, our hereafter is our true treasure, for then shall we enjoy our God to the full. These storerooms and barns, banks and iron safes cannot hold our portion—behold our treasure is secured where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, neither do thieves break through and steal. It is worthy of observation that this clear claim which David sets up is not merely felt in his own heart, but it is uttered in the most

solemn place, even in the Presence of God. He addresses himself to the all-seeing, heart-searching God and cries, "You are my portion, O Lord." Though I stand before You, great God, even before You who can read me through and through, yet I dare make my claim—You know all things and You know that I do choose You to be my All in All.

Though I gaze upon Your splendor, which bids angels veil their faces because of its excess of Glory, yet I call that splendor mine! However great You are, I adore with trembling, but yet my faith calls Your greatness mine. You are my portion! Nothing less than Your own Self, O infinitely glorious, Omnipotent, thrice-holy Jehovah! My soul does not bound her humble claim, nor rest content with a part of You, but You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit—You one God— and You, Yourself, are my portion!

Do you see how fully assured of his interest in Divine Love a man must be if He dares to speak thus in the Presence of the infinite Majesty and to challenge the Divine judgment upon his claim? You see he speaks in the present tense. There are a great many whose religion lies in, "shall be," hope and trust, but David's faith lay in the present tense. "You are my portion, O Lord." There are some things which I have not received as yet, but I have already laid hold upon my God. Many things I press forward to obtain, for I have aspirations which are, as yet, unfulfilled, and spiritual ambitions not yet satisfied, but You are even now my God, despite my infirmities and shortcomings. Yes, even today, my God, You are mine.

At this hour, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." I know whom I have believed. I know that He has given Himself to me as I have given myself to Him. Beyond a doubt, You are, at this very moment, my portion, O Lord. May the Lord teach you, Brothers and Sisters, to speak in the same confident manner. If true Believers, you have a right to speak so because you simply declare a fact. Do not be satisfied to leave such a matter in question—aim at positive certainty. Pray the Lord to give you the full assurance of faith that you may always unwaveringly say, "You are my portion, O Lord."

Now let us linger for a few moments while we muse upon the portion, itself, a subject which it might require many an hour to consider fully. The text contains an intelligent description of this portion—"You are my portion, O Lord." The Psalmist at once mentions the very heart and center of his spiritual wealth—"You are my portion, O Lord." What a boundless portion! Parochial authorities beat the bounds of the parish and great men make surveys of their estates, but none can beat the bounds or make a full survey of this inheritance of the saints! A man takes stock in trade, or sits down to balance his accounts, but there is

no taking stock here—towards the infinite God there are no calculations—figures are lost and even imagination swallowed up!

Our inheritance surpasses that of all the men of the world put together! Yes, and apart from having something of the like, even angels could not vie with us! Heaven itself is not so vast a treasure as the God of Heaven! How ought we to prize an inheritance which knows no boundary! Indeed, Brothers and Sisters, we require something boundless—our soul pines for the infinite! I appeal to those of you who have been favored in Divine Providence with prosperity beyond what you expected. Do you feel that it fills your soul? You are content that God should give you what He wills, but do you find satisfaction in earthly property?

What if your children are a comfort to you and your house is filled with all manner of provisions and friendly neighbors speak well of you? Can you find perfect rest in these things? Do they yield you inward, heart-filling joy? I know they cannot! If you were to be as highly favored as Solomon, himself, who beyond all men enjoyed this present world, yet would you have to come to Solomon's own conclusion, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." For a regenerate man, this life is like a bird within a shell just wakened into life. However comfortable the shell may be for him, in its way and after its fashion, yet as life becomes vigorous, he needs more space. He needs wing room, he needs to get out of his prison and roam at large!

The things which are seen are a prison to the soul—our spirit needs more air, more space in which to breathe. When a man can truly say, "My God, You are mine," he has touched the confines of the infinite and he has reached the Ultima Thule of his spirit, where he may cast anchor and no more tempt the troubled sea of desire. When we reach God, our soul is at peace, but not till then—for then the immortal soul has gained the immortal God and eternal destiny is sealed with happiness by eternal love! And while this inheritance is boundless, how abiding it is! A man who has the Lord for his portion has a freehold for eternity! His lease will never run out and there will need no renewal of lives, for there is one life on which our tenure hangs and that is everlasting! "Because I live, you shall live, also."

He that gets God has an entailed estate. He has in Him a Friend who cannot change, who cannot fail, who cannot cease to be, nor cease to be the source of blessedness to those who possess Him. Of this portion time cannot deprive us, nor death rob us, nor judgment deprive us, nor eternity bereave us. "This God is our God forever and ever." Ah, you worldlings, all your goods shall wither like Jonah's gourd, but our God shall be our shield and our exceedingly great reward, world without end! As the Lord is an abiding portion, so is He an appropriate portion in every way suitable to content the soul.

Man was made in the image of God, and nothing will satisfy man but God, in whose image he was made. Manna was fit food for man and God Himself is fit sustenance for the man of God. Only in the Lord can the mind and heart find that which all their faculties require for their development and perfection. When renewed by Grace, our powers are adapted

to receive God and to rejoice in Him and, therefore, a full possession of God is the craving of the heart. In God there is food for memory which looks upon the past and for hope which gazes into the future. There is food for the judgment, which weighs, for the will, which decides—for the affections, which clasp and for the imagination, which creates.

There is no power of humanity which is properly a part of God-made man which does not find its due sphere and place in God. How well my portion suits me! Adam was not more at home in Paradise than I am in my God. My soul, by Grace, is brought into a place of sweet content and delights herself in the abundance of peace. This portion is to the fullest degree, satisfying. Nothing else will ever end the awful hunger of the soul of man, which, like the grave, forever yawns for more. But the infinite God fills the heart and he who has the Lord for his portion has all that he can desire—

"All my capacious powers can wish In You does richly meet."

You may sit down and imagine all that you could have wished—and then if you rightly view your God—you will see that He surpasses all your desires. Never, even in eternity, will you be able to conceive of a joy beyond your God, a bliss surpassing Himself!

Next, dear Brothers and Sisters, the Lord is an elevating portion. A man is gradually changed into the image of that which he loves. He who has his portion in this world grows worldly. When a man gives himself to any pursuit he, first of all molds it, and then it molds him. We say a man rides a hobby, but after a while the hobby rides the man. You will find it so. Now, if a man seeks his wealth in the things of this life and covets gold, he will become metallic, hard, and unfeeling. He who lives to increase his land soon becomes of the earth, earthy. To pursue carnal things will degrade a man, cramp his mind and hold him in captivity to base materialism. He that loves to hoard that he may gratify his covetousness by counting over his stores—what a wretched creature he becomes!

Better, by far, to be a poor squirrel who, in due time, enjoys the little store of nuts and acorns! The worldling is little better than the mole who burrows through the earth and never looks upon the sun. Earth, earth, earth—nothing but earth does the carnal heart care for—its faculties are all pressed downward and forced to become adapted for its groveling sphere. Nothing is more debasing than to live for self and, the more a selfish man has, the more base-hearted he becomes.

But if our portion is the Lord, our delight in Him raises our thoughts and purifies our emotions. Covetousness, selfishness, worldliness all vanish when God is All in All to us. If God is ours, we seek to be like He is—we become followers of God as dear children. "He that has this hope in him purifies himself." He who is possessed of the light is filled with light—He who has God is filled with God. The Holy Spirit transforms us until, at last, He makes us to be qualified to dwell with Him forever. Only one more thought on this portion, although many are crowding upon my mind. If God is my portion, then my portion is all of Grace, for no one can merit God. The idea is utterly ridiculous, if not profane. No human

excellence could merit Deity. If, then, the Lord is my portion, let my song always be of that rich, free, sovereign, boundless Grace which is given to me who deserves Hell, but obtains Heaven!

I want to call your attention, once more, to this infinite possession, or rather to the seasonable utterance of David concerning it, for it is very noteworthy that this holy claim has generally been made by godly men at peculiar times. Did you ever notice the parallel passages? Truly the Lord is His people's God at all times, but His people rejoice most in the possession of Him when they have most trouble. In the particular instance before us I find in the 51st verse, "The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from Your Law." And in the 61st verse—"The bands of the wicked have robbed me: but I have not forgotten Your Law."

David appears to have been between two fires—derided by the proud and robbed by the oppressor—and it is in the middle of this double trouble that he puts in his claim, "You are my portion, O Lord." Perhaps the robbers helped him to think more of that treasure which no thief can steal. Perhaps the derision of the proud made him remember the kindly condescension of the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, who deigned to be his portion. Look at another instance, where the same language is used, namely, in Psalm 16:5, and you will find the Psalmist declares, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: You maintain my lot. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: my flesh, also, shall rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hell; neither will You suffer your Holy One to see corruption."

So far as this language is that of David, you see that he claims God for his portion in the prospect of death and the grave. How good it is to have a living hope in dying moments, to be full of light when peering into the darkness of the grave! When death is taking away everything else, then does the Christian cling to the portion which can never be touched by Death's bony fingers. Read, again, in the 73rd Psalm, at the 26th verse. There Asaph claims God as his portion. But you know the Psalm is all about the trouble of mind which he felt while he fretted over his own affliction and contrasted it with the prosperity of the wicked.

One more instance. In Lamentations 3:24, Jeremiah says, "The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in Him." But that is said in connection with a long roll of sorrows concerning which the Prophet had said, "O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears." Beloved, learn this lesson—if in Scripture you find God claimed as the portion of His saints when under different forms of trial, then when you are in deep affliction and when you come near to die, you, also, may find the strength of your heart and the sustenance of your courage in this same blessed fact that the Lord is your portion.

II. Secondly, let us consider THE APPROPRIATE RESOLUTION—"I have said that I would keep Your Words." Here notice the preface, "I have said." Why did he not put it, "You are my portion, O Lord; I will keep Your Words"? No, he writes "I have said it," which means

deliberation. He had thought over his happiness in having such a portion. What then? His thoughts began to stir within him and to devise a fit expression for his gratitude and he, at last, said, "I will keep Your Words."

It was no hasty thought but a determined resolve. I suppose he also means that he had given a distinct pledge. He had opened his mouth to the Lord and could not go back. "I have said"—to my God, to myself, to my fellow men—"I have said I will keep Your Words." It signifies, also, an adherence to what had been said—I have said it and that is the end of all questions about it. Do not distress me any more, the die is cast. I have said it, and—

"High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear:
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear." I have said it, my God, and I will not unsay it. What I have written I have written. Others have heard me say it. I have said it in the presence of a cloud of witnesses—men and angels looking on. I have said it and so let it stand in time and in eternity.

It is time that we investigated the link between the portion possessed and the resolution made. It is not very difficult to discover. God is best known to us by His Words. His works reveal Him by a reflected light as the moon, but His Words display Him by a direct light as a very sun of light to us. How do I know God except by His Words? The God of Revelation is the Christian's God. Philosophers, nowadays, worship a god of their own imagination—they construct a god out of their own consciousness and a very pretty god he is, indeed! But the God of the Christian is the God who has spoken and whose Words are preserved here, in THE BOOK. The God of the Inspired Word is our God and because this God is our portion and we know Him by His Words, therefore have we said we will keep His Words.

I want you to notice that there always seems to have been a connection between the possession of the portion and the keeping of the Words of God. When God said to Abraham, "Fear not, Abram: I am your shield, and your exceedingly great reward," (Gen. 15:1), a little further down, in the 6th verse, we read, "And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." First he receives God to be his own—"I am Your shield"—and then he keeps God's Word, for he believes it. How did he know that God was his shield except through the Word which God had spoken to him?

Notice in the first verse, "After these things the Word of the Lord came unto Abram," and again in the 4th verse, "And, behold, the Word of the Lord came unto him." He believed—this was Abraham's way of keeping the Words of the Lord and it is worthy of our imitation. Oh for Grace to believe every Word that God speaks and to never start aside unto unbelief on any pretense whatever, for every Word of the Lord is sure and abides true forever! By keeping God's Words we fulfill the type of Israel in the wilderness.

Do you not remember the story of the manna, which is contained in the 16th of Exodus? Now, the manna is so named, according to Rabbi Kimchi, because the people saw in it their "portion." Our version reads, "They said, It is manna"— for they were not sure what it was, but according to the rabbi, they said, "It is a portion: for they knew not what it was." Men did eat angels' food in the wilderness! They realized, there, that, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Their feeding on manna was the type of the Lord being our portion! But what then? They ate the manna, but did they keep any part of it?

Assuredly they did! Look at the 32nd verse, "This is the thing which the Lord commands, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations." God Himself is my manna, or portion and, therefore, I will treasure Him up as He is revealed in His Word, which is the golden pot in which the heavenly food is preserved. Brothers and Sisters, let us keep the Divine Word in the very secrets of our heart as in a golden pot, saying with the Psalmist, "Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You."

Another beautiful type of the exaltation which the Believer gets when he can practically realize our text will be found in Numbers 18:20, "And the Lord spoke unto Aaron, You shall have no inheritance in the land, neither shall you have any part among them: I am Your part and your inheritance among the children of Israel." See, Beloved, we take our share with the high priest, for he had God to be his only portion. Was it not a better portion than all the rest put together? Happy are the people whom the Lord Jesus has made to be priests and to whom He has given the priest's portion, namely, Himself!

But what is our duty if this is the case? We must note how the priests of the tribe of Levi behaved and imitate them. We read in Deuteronomy 33:9—"Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: or they have observed Your Word, and kept Your Covenant." Their heritage was the Lord and they kept His Words, for the priest's lips should keep knowledge. They lived upon the meat of the Lord's house and they were bound carefully to keep His ordinances. If you are priests unto God it falls unto you, likewise, that as God is the lot of your inheritance and your portion, your daily business is, like the tribe of Levi, to observe the Word of God and keep His Covenant.

Moreover, the Words of God are our title-deeds to our portion. Men despise them and so might a stranger pour contempt upon old deeds relating to property in which he has no concern. "What is the good of those old parchments?" says the ignorant man when he sees legal documents. "What is the good of the old Book?" cry others even more ignorant! Ah, we know their value—those to whom those title-deeds secure an inheritance prize them

exceedingly! Whenever you hear people talking about Bibliolatry and finding fault with us for believing in verbal Inspiration, you will find that they set small store by Covenant treasures. And, what is more, you will soon discover that they tamper with our Divine charter in order to rob us of the choice Truths of the Gospel—and that the top and bottom of their meddling with the Divine Words of Inspiration is a design to take away their portion from the people of God.

Leave them alone and you will soon see them tearing away one privilege after another and making great havoc with our comforts. Therefore, warned by what we have seen them do, we have said, "I will keep Your Words," for we shall not, otherwise, be able to keep God for our portion. If we let even the jots and tittles go, we may soon discover a flaw in our title and we cannot afford to do that! Our possession is too precious for us to tamper with the securities by which we hold it. "You are my portion, O Lord; I have said that I would keep Your Words."

Now, very briefly, what is this work of keeping God's Words? I pray God, the Holy Spirit, to help us to know it by practically carrying it out every day of our lives. First, then, there is a WORD which above all is to be kept, enshrined in the heart and obeyed in the life. "In the beginning was the Word." That very name, "the Word," given to Christ, puts the highest honor upon every other Word of Revelation. Beware of trifling or being negligent towards any Word of the

Lord, since Jesus Christ is the chief and sum of the Words of God. Keep Him, hold Him, abide in Him, continue in Him, never let Him go. "I have said that I would keep Your Words"—this means the Words of the Gospel.

This we will accept by sincere and simple faith. The Gospel of Free Grace, of Substitution, of Atonement by blood, of Justification by Faith—this we will hold by faith right steadfastly so long as we breathe. All our hope hangs there and, therefore, there we will abide, neither shall any seduce us from it. "I have said that I would keep Your Words"— that is, "I will believe Your doctrines." When I cannot comprehend the great mysteries I will still believe them. Though others dispute, I will believe! Despite the insinuations of crafty men, I will hold to the doctrines of Grace intensely— believing them as long as Reason holds her Throne.

What I see to be in God's Word I will not dare to doubt or neglect. The Doctrines of Grace are the backbone of the Christian life. Keep to them for your comfort and you shall never be ashamed of them. If you willingly tamper with any one of the doctrines, there is no knowing where you will drift. Cast out more anchors—never let the vessel drift. "I have said that I would keep Your Words," that is, Your Words of precept. What You bid me do, I will delight to do. I will not merely rejoice in the doctrines, but in the commands, also, and I will ask for Grace to obey them all. I will keep Your ordinances, too, for they are a part of Your Word and are to be kept as they were delivered, without addition or diminution.

I will not say, "This is non-essential, and this is unimportant," but, "I have said that I would keep Your Words and keep them I will, through Your Grace, in every particular. I will do what You bid me, as you bid me, when You bid me." So much evil has grown out of slight departures from Scripture that Christian men ought to be very scrupulous and carefully observe every ordinance as it is set forth in the Word of God. "I have said that I would keep Your Words," that is, I will keep Your promises in my heart to comfort me. I will keep them in my faith, expecting their fulfillment. I will keep them in my mind for daily use and solace. And on my tongue, that I may encourage others.

Since the Lord keeps His promises by fulfilling them, we ought to keep them by remembering them. "I have said that I will keep Your Words," and this especially includes the Word which the Lord has pledged in His Covenant. I will rejoice to think that You have, by deed of gift, made Yourself over to me! Now will I keep in mind Your Word and oath pledged to the Lord Jesus on my behalf! Now will I rejoice in the blood which ratified the Covenant and in the Covenant Word itself. See what an ocean of room I have in my topic and yet I have merely coasted and skirted the shore! What boundless sailing room there would be if we were to launch out into the deep!

My Brothers and Sisters, pray for Grace to keep every Word of God with all your hearts! Do not believe, as some do, that it does not matter what is truth or what is falsehood. It makes all the difference conceivable! God's Word against man's word any day in the week! I fear that the ancient power of Protestantism has evaporated through the influence of those who hold loose views upon Inspiration and who are busy manufacturing new gospels instead of preaching the old one which is already in the Word. The great thinkers may propound what they choose and the learned men of this age may invent what doctrines they like, but one thing I know—they will not cause those who have God for their portion to give up His Words!

For these 24 years you have found me here preaching the Words of God and you will find me here, still, if I live another 24 years. By His Grace I am incapable of moving one inch away from the old faith! One thing I know, namely, the Gospel of Substitution! And one thing I do, namely, preach it! I have determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! When we get through all the Words of God we will begin them again—but we shall still keep to the old Book and its old, old story! The children shall go on eating their daily bread and, not even for novelty's sake, will we give them the stones of modern thought!

Now, to conclude. This blessed subject very painfully suggests to me a solemn contrast. Will you, at your leisure, read another portion which the Lord reserves for certain persons? God grant we may never inherit it! It is the portion for hypocrites. In Matthew 24:50, our Lord speaks very strongly of some and I will tell you the reason why He deals so terribly with them. He says of some that, "the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks

not for Him and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Do you know what this man had done? He had not kept Christ's Word! His Master had said that He would come, and he did not keep the word about His second coming, nor believe in it at all, but, according to the 48th verse, he said,

"My Lord delays His coming." And then he began to act upon it, to smite his fellow servants and to eat and drink and to be drunk, so that, not keeping what some think a very small matter—the Word concerning the future coming of Christ—he was found to be a hypocrite and had his portion appointed with false-hearted pretenders.

The same passage, with a little variation, comes in Luke 12:46, where the unfaithful servant is said to have his "portion with unbelievers," which is equally to be dreaded. The threat seems most to apply to ministers and teachers of the Word who are unfaithful to the Truth of God. The condemned one was not a faithful and wise steward and did not bring forth things new and old with which to feed his Master's servants and he, also, doubted whether his Master would ever come to call him to account. And so he had his portion among unbelievers.

It will be an awful thing for me and for any minister here, or any other teacher of the people, if we do not bring forth things new and old out of the Gospel to give the saints their portion of meat in due season. If we keep from the Lord's servants, their portion, we shall be kept without our portion, or rather we shall have it, but it will be a portion of the most awful kind! This makes it solemn work for any of you who attempt to teach others. God grant that you may give forth a good portion! Give out the things that are new, that is the Gospel, which is always new—and give out the old things, the antiquities of everlasting love and electing Grace—bring them all forth in proportion lest you be found, at last, to have been unbelievers.

We will finish when we duly note one more point, namely this, that if you do diligently keep God's Words and if it is the joy of your heart to live on them, feed upon them and defend them against all comers, you may take this as an evidence that you are one of the Lord's people. Poor Job fell back upon that when he was in great distress. And at such seasons you may do the same. Job 23:8-10—"Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He does work, but I cannot behold Him: He hides Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him: but He knows the way that I take: when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

And why? "My foot has held His steps, His way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed the Words of His month more than my necessary food," or, "my portion," as many translate it. The Words of God were dear to him! He felt he had kept them and, therefore, he said, "He knows the way

that I take: when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." If you trifle with God's Words you will miss a great evidence of being His child!

Unless you are very strict as to what you believe and what you do. Unless you make the Word of God to be the chart by which you steer your course when you come into stormy waters and the devil begins to tempt you and the world laughs at you, you will not be able to fall back upon the evidence which Job could so honestly quote in his own favor. And neither will you have the sweet confidence that when the Lord has tried you, He will bring you forth as gold. The Lord bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.